

further proceedings of the investigation which is currently going on into the activities of the RCMP. As I understand it, the accusation made by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) is based upon testimony before that commission given by the former commissioner of the RCMP. If that is indeed the case, it seems to me that in the name of common sense we should wait until we hear the rest of the testimony of that former commissioner and until we hear the results of the cross-examination of that witness before the royal commission.

Mr. Baldwin: It is going on in camera. How can we hear it?

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) seems to want to build a reputation on certain aspects of security, availability of information, and so on. I do not blame him for that. In fact I applaud him for it. He wants to know how we can find out what is happening when the proceedings are taking place in camera. Well, it is obvious we should await the report of the royal commission; the House could then deal with the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham. The fact that he waited for five years before raising it indicates to me that there is no urgency attached to the matter at this point.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Baldwin: We might never see the report.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): The hon. member interjects to say we might never see the report. Well, I, at least, expect to be around here longer than that, and I expect to see the report. I know it is the government's intention to make the report public because, obviously, the government does not appoint a royal commission and then hide the report the commission makes.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You haven't been around here very long.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): The concept of ministerial responsibility is important to us, and there should be no question that parliament is the highest court in the land. The government has proven over and over again that it is determined to find the whole truth in this matter. It has proven this, first by forbidding ministers of the Crown to go before the Keable commission in Quebec—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): —to give that commission documents which were outside its authority. Subsequently the government established the McDonald commission to inquire into the RCMP. This commission has the legal status to look into all the activities of the force and report on them fully and completely. That is something we would

never have received from the Keable commission, as should be obvious to everyone.

Statements have been made to the effect that the government will not allow a report to be made. That is a specious argument. It is entirely sensible that we should wait until we hear the evidence before the McDonald inquiry. The worst aspect, from the point of view of the question under consideration, is that no matter what that evidence may be, no matter what the decision of this House may be with regard to the ruling made yesterday by Mr. Speaker, the reporting, or I should say, the misreporting of what happened here yesterday, has convicted the government of the day in the minds of the people of Canada of, and I quote, "deliberately misleading the House."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): That is not what the Speaker ruled yesterday, and every member over there knows it is not what the government ruled yesterday.

An hon. Member: The government?

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): When they sit there now and say, "Hear, hear" they are only adding to the deliberate misrepresentation of the facts to the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): They say, "Hear, hear" to that, too. They agree they are trying to misrepresent the facts to the public. That is the position I take in this debate.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I was not here yesterday afternoon and I was not aware of the fact that a debate was to take place on this subject. It is always difficult to take part in a debate simply on the basis of reading *Hansard*. However, I am glad the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has let the cat out of the bag. He said the people of Canada today believe the government is guilty. Well, never did the people come to a conclusion more in conformity with the facts! I am very happy that in his dying words he was able to make very clear that the people of Canada as a whole think this government is guilty. That has made this debate worth while. If he had not participated, there might have been some doubt. After that participation I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) will not recommend him for appointment to a ministerial post.

Having said that, I want to deal with one or two matters in very short form. The motion before the House reads:

That the letter sent by the Solicitor General of the day to the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham on December 4, 1973, and the testimony of former RCMP commissioner Higgitt on October 24 and November 1, 1978, before the royal commission of inquiry (McDonald commission) concerning the practice of the RCMP in preparing letters for the signature of the Solicitor General, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for investigation and report.